



DWIGHT PELZ

A REPORT FROM KING COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER DWIGHT PELZ

February 1999

Study Challenges Distribution of Human Services Throughout County

AS your representative on the King County Council, one of the most difficult challenges I face is working with a community when a new residential human services facility is proposed. Neighbors can feel threatened. They want answers. They want to meet with the organization sponsoring the new facility. And sometimes they just want to oppose it.

In June of 1997, the IT House, an organization that provides housing and assistance to sex-offenders transitioning from prison back into the community, announced it had an option to buy a building in the Rainier Valley. The news that it was going to relocate its 17 bed operation from Capitol Hill was met by fear, anger, and strict opposition from South Seattle residents.

In March of 1998, the Union Gospel Mission reported it would open a 50 bed men's homeless shelter in a vacated nursing home in Boulevard Park. The community was anxious, though not as directly alarmed as the Rainier Valley neighbors.

One month later, in April of '98, Boulevard Park learned that yet another vacated nursing home had been purchased by a social service organization (SeaDrumar) to establish a 125 bed residential drug and

alcohol treatment facility. Boulevard Park residents were anxious once more, and began asking *"Why us again? Don't any other communities take these facilities?"*

You and I support the work of these agencies . . .

They are essential organizations, committing scarce resources to aid human beings in crisis or in transition. Their boards of directors and staff have a vision of public service, and pursue those visions with passion and personal sacrifice.

And the people of the Rainier Valley and Boulevard Park are generous, caring, and concerned. We have welcomed many a human service agency into our community, and backed them with their personal participation and financial support.

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Dear Friend and Neighbor:

THIS edition of the 5th District News examines the distribution of critical and controversial human services throughout King County. We've conducted a study which documents what you and I already know — that certain communities are home to more than their share of these services.

This newsletter will give you an introduction to the issues involved. I am committed to work with you to achieve more support for these human services, and a more equitable distribution throughout King County.

Sincerely,

Zip Codes with Largest Number of Housing Units and Services

98104	Districts 4, 10 — Pioneer Square	5,346 units	
			11.2 % of total
98118	District 5 — Rainier Valley	3,088	6.5 %
98122	District 10 — Central District	2,901	6.1 %
98101	District 4 — Downtown Seattle	2,716	5.7 %
98121	Dist. 4 — Belltown	2,083	4.4 %

- The above five zip codes contain 33.7% of the King County total.
- There are 72 zip codes in King County.

Human Services Distribution...

Continued from page 1

We realize that, in the long run, these facilities make all of our neighborhoods safer. But the familiar question is, “Is our community being asked to take more than its fair share?”

This question prompted me to look at where the **controversial residential human service agencies and “beds”** are located throughout King County, and which communities appear to have more than their fair share of those facilities that can cause so much community anxiety.

The result is **Distribution, Disparity, and Disproportionality**, a report that examines the distribution of human services throughout King County. This study details disturbing inequities that warrant the need for a close examination by the County Council, as well as by other city and local leaders and service providers.

Summary Findings

Distribution, Disparity and Disproportionality: Human Services and Housing in King County examines the distribution of specific, controversial residential human services and subsidized housing in King County. Our findings show there are clear disparities in how KC’s residential housing and human services are distributed among our various cities and unincorporated communities.

Data collected and analyzed for this report include:

- Subsidized Housing
- Licensed Boarding Homes
- Substance Abuse Treatment Facilities
- Youth Residential Beds
- Registered Sex Offenders
- Work Release and Parole Offices

- Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing Beds for the Homeless

Significant Findings

◆ 90% of the total Emergency Shelter beds in King County are located in the City of Seattle (with the majority located in the downtown core). This is at a time when the City of Seattle is facing the loss of millions of dollars in Federal grants for the homeless.

◆ 72% of the total Public and Subsidized Housing units in King County are located within the City of Seattle.

◆ 76% of the total temporary housing services for the homeless in King County are in the City of Seattle.

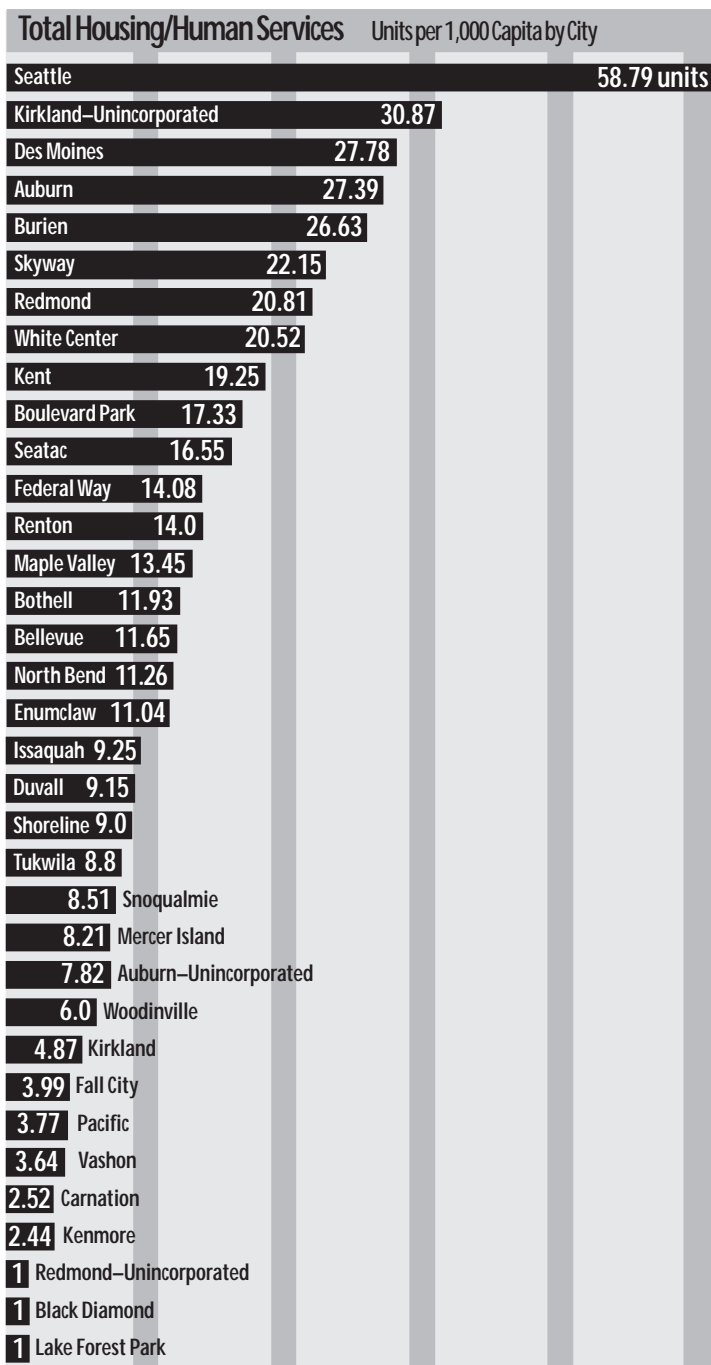
◆ Outside Seattle, per capita data reveal that other cities and communities are impacted as well. Auburn, Kent, Burien, Skyway, Federal Way, Boulevard Park, White Center, SeaTac and Des Moines follow Seattle as cities most heavily impacted.

◆ The greatest per capita number of Registered Sex Offenders is in suburban, low

income or working class communities. The top five are Boulevard Park, SeaTac, Auburn, Fall City, and Skyway.

◆ Only eight cities in King County have Inpatient Substance Abuse Treatment beds. The highest per capita bed rate is in Maple Valley, with nearly three times more beds, per capita, than any other city.

◆ Burien, Auburn, Kent, Skyway and Renton follow the City of



Seattle in the highest per capita rates of subsidized housing along with the unincorporated King County area adjacent to Kirkland city-proper.

Study Conclusion

Most communities aren't taking their fair share of services, and this needs to be addressed.

Residential human services and subsidized public housing units are being concentrated in specific cities and neighborhoods in King County. Those areas receiving these services are characterized by lower property values, and by political and community environments more supportive of these human services. Those areas lacking these services are characterized by higher property values, and by political and community environments less supportive of these human services. This is inappropriate.

All communities in our Metropolitan King County should either house their fair share of these services, or make payments in lieu to cities and unincorporated areas shouldering a disproportionately higher burden.

The King County budget for FY 2000 and future years should direct human services funding to those

What Human Services Did We Study?

Emergency Shelter & Transitional Housing Beds in King County Shelters—King County has a fairly extensive network of emergency shelter facilities and voucher programs, with a capacity of over 2,400 slots. System-wide shelter referrals are made through the Crisis Clinic's bed bank, which keeps daily information on shelter availability, and Operation Nightwatch, assisting with late night placement into shelter.

Transitional Housing Resources—A total of 923 transitional housing units are available in King County to assist formerly homeless people as they regain stability in their lives. Of these, about 75 percent are located in the City of Seattle and 25 percent are in the balance of the County. Transitional housing is also available to individuals or families in transition from substance abuse, domestic violence or group care.

Long Term Housing for Homeless People—For the most part, formerly homeless people are searching for affordable housing along with the rest of the region's low and moderate income residents, and find it very difficult. The lion's share of affordable housing for homeless people is the housing that is made available through the King County Housing Authority and the Seattle Housing Authority. These include Public Housing, Shelter Plus Care, and Non Profit owned.

Public Housing—Residents in this program are required to pay 30 percent of their adjusted household income for rent. Average monthly rent for the public housing program is \$179.32. The median income for the public housing program is \$6,941.

Subsidized Housing—Residents in this program obtain lower rents (derived from various government sources and programs) with subsidies generally given directly to the private property owner.

Licensed Boarding Homes—A facility having DSHS certification for provision of board and care services. Boarding houses may also be called congregate facilities, or long term treatment rehabilitation facilities, or supervised group homes.

Youth Residential Beds—Refers to beds designated specifically for youth, generally in a facility that provides youth with additional counseling and support services. Youth residential beds may include: emergency shelter, transitional housing, teen mothers & babies, group homes, interim care, therapeutic foster care, and residential substance abuse treatment. As many of these facilities receive subsidies from city, state or federal housing program, youth residential beds are also included in subsidized housing.

Registered Sex Offenders are required by law to register their address of residence with the King County Sheriff's Office.

communities that accept their fair share of human services facilities and have committed to providing services to the corresponding at-risk populations.

If you would like additional information about this report, or a detail of the statistics behind the summary and charts, please contact my office.

Give 'em shelter, rich suburbs told

By NEIL MODIE
PI REPORTER

Big surprise: King County's homeless, sex offenders, prison parolees, substance-abuse patients and other unwanted people have a hard time finding refuge in Seattle's priciest suburbs.

But Dwight Pelz, a member of the Metropolitan King County Council, yesterday said it's time for affluent suburbs to do their part: either accommodate more of the least desirable, residential social-service programs or help pay to have them housed in someone else's back yard.

"Everybody needs to step up and do their share," Pelz said as he released a report showing that nearly all of the county's most controversial residential facilities are in Seattle and its modest-income southern suburbs.

Even on a per-capita basis, Seattle has by far the most.

In the report, Pelz said King County budgets for 1999 and future years "should direct human services funding to those communities that accept their fair share of human services facilities and have committed to providing services to the corresponding at-risk populations."

Pelz's council district includes

the working-class communities of Boulevard Park, Burien and Rainier Valley, which he said have done much to accommodate the unwanted.

"A sex offender is announced (as residing) in downtown Bellevue, and obviously they're going to go a little bit nuts," the councilman said.

He admitted that real estate costs in such wealthy enclaves as Medina and Mercer Island would make it impractical to house such programs in those communities, even if they were receptive to the idea.

Mercer Island Mayor Gordy Edberg acknowledged afterward, "Frankly, I dare say that you would

find a lot of community resistance to that . . . I think that as far as we are aware, there is no public outcry or even a strongly stated public interest in even providing for that in the community."

Edberg had little to say about Pelz's report, but said Mercer Island has focused on providing subsidized housing through a program with other suburban cities, and with permitting "mother-in-law" dwelling units and other affordable ancillary housing.

Given recent county efforts to address and pay for social-service

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—The Seattle Post-Intelligencer, November 6, 1998; reprinted with permission. For a copy of this or other articles, please contact my office.

Human Services Create Anxiety for Communities

ALL elected officials — members of Congress, state legislators, county councilmembers, and city councilmembers — invariably are presented with proposals to open new human services facilities or public housing in their jurisdictions, and then face anxious constituents. Seattle struggled mightily over proposals to house human service programs at Sand Point.

Both the cities of Edmonds and Bellevue presented legal challenges attempting to prohibit the placement of youth group homes in each of their respective communities. Bellevue actually passed zoning laws designed to discourage group

homes in residential neighborhoods altogether by assigning them to commercial zones. Both of these efforts failed.

But the Edmonds and Bellevue experiences prompted former Congressman Rick White to co-sponsor legislation to change the federal Fair Housing Act. HR 3206 would have allowed local governments to adopt standards to impede certain types of housing, including group homes in residential neigh-

borhoods, and give municipalities sweeping new powers to prevent human services from entering their communities.

This would have had one of two distasteful outcomes — either forcing more facilities into neighborhoods with lower property values and fewer lawyers; or reducing the actual number of these valuable and humane agencies which ultimately improve life for all of us.

5TH DISTRICT
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King County

5th District News is published periodically by the Metropolitan King County Council. Please forward your comments, questions and suggestions to Dwight Pelz at: Room 1200, King County Courthouse, 516 Third Avenue, Seattle, WA 98104-3237.

Phone 296-1005 • Fax 296-0198

E-mail dwight.pelz@metrokc.gov

Web Site www.metrokc.gov